

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, throughout most of our history, the world has admired the United States for our dedication to freedom, international law, and human rights. But today America's prestige is in the pits because of the administration's reckless occupation of Iraq.

The resignation last week of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy at the State Department brought new attention to our low standing in the world. The Under Secretary was hired in 2005 to improve our image in the world with a public relations campaign. But the effort failed. It failed because no amount of spin could overcome the catastrophic consequences of our occupation of Iraq.

Today, according to the Pew Global Attitudes Project, our image in the world is actually worse than it was before the public relations campaign began. Pew surveyed 33 countries and found that the United States is viewed less favorably in 26 of those countries. To be fair to the Under Secretary, her bosses in the White House had done a good job of trashing America's image in the world long before she started her job.

At the beginning of this decade, Mr. Speaker, the United States was viewed very favorably in many countries. But not anymore. For example, 78 percent of the German people viewed the United States favorably in the year 2000. Now it's just 37 percent. In Spain we have gone from a favorability rating of 50 percent to 23 percent. In Great Britain we have gone from 83 percent to 56 percent. And in France we have gone from 62 to 39.

In the Muslim world, we have just about fallen off the charts. In Turkey, for example, we have gone from 52 percent to just 12 percent.

And, most tragically, our occupation of Iraq has undermined support for American leadership in the fight against terrorism. In fact, less than half the people in all the countries I just cited are now willing to follow our lead.

We shouldn't be surprised by this. It is much harder to convince others to get behind us in the fight against terrorism when they actually believe that we are the threat to peace ourselves. And it's much harder for us to fight many other world problems, including poverty, disease, lack of education, and global warming when our standing in the world has hit rock bottom.

This foreign policy disaster is the result of a White House that has run amok for nearly 7 years. When you tear up your treaties, walk away from your friends, condone torture, go to war under false pretenses, and carelessly throw around words like "World War III," you don't make America stronger; you make America weaker by destroying our credibility and undermining our moral authority.

The American people understand this, and they are demanding a new course for our Nation. They know the

administration will never give us that; so they are looking to Congress to do the job. So far we have failed, but we have the power to turn things around, the power of the purse. We must use it, and we must use it to insist that any further funding for Iraq be dedicated to bringing our troops home. We must fully fund the safe, orderly, and timely redeployment of our troops out of Iraq. And we must also force the withdrawal of all of our military contractors who are acting like thugs in our Nation. We have a chance. We have a chance right now. If we don't take advantage of it, we will have failed our children and we will have failed America.

□ 1415

U.S. GOVERNMENT MUST PROTECT ITS PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PERLMUTTER). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, it is the first duty of government, especially our government, to protect the people. That is why governments are formed throughout the world. That is why the United States was formed, to protect the people who live in this great country of ours.

This weekend, we honor the veterans that have served in our military throughout all of its wars. It started on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918, which was called Armistice Day, to end the war to end all wars, World War I. We now call it Veterans Day, where we honor those who went to war and came home.

Now America is engaged in wars in lands far, far away. We are engaged in the war in Iraq, we are engaged in the war in Afghanistan, and Mr. Speaker, it is my opinion that the finest military that has ever existed in the history of the world is fighting for American values in Iraq and Afghanistan, the American warriors.

You know, they are fighting in the deserts of Iraq, the mountains of Afghanistan. But we are also engaged in a war closer to home, that for some reason many have missed it, and it's the border war that we have on our southern border.

You see, our people who live in the southern part of the United States, and I happen to be one of them, I'm from the State of Texas, they are concerned about a constant invasion into our homeland by people that come here without permission. These people are coming into this country and they are colonizing our Nation. I have been to the southern border of Texas and Mexico over a dozen times. I've been to the border in Arizona, the border in California with Mexico, and every time I go to the border, the situation is worse. It is, by any definition, a war zone.

In the American town of Laredo, across the river, in Nuevo Laredo, it is

a hostile and violent place. In the year 2005, there were 147 murders in Nuevo Laredo, many of them peace officers, and not one case has been solved. There have been 400 kidnappings; 41 of those have been American citizens kidnapped in Mexico, and not one case, not one has been solved by law enforcement.

It is a violent place. We have the three drug cartels coming in from Mexico, bringing that cancer into our country, and they are violent because it's all about money. And now they're working with the human coyotes, and they smuggle drugs and people into our country, all because of the almighty dollar.

We have reports of the Mexican military that have come across our border in arrogance and defiance, coming here to apparently help the drug smugglers bring in the drugs. But be that as it may, Homeland Security seems to be blissfully silent about the problem on the southern border with Mexico. And I ask the question, why? Is it because of political reasons? What do we owe the nation of Mexico? Our government, Homeland Security, owes the American public public defense.

It is the first duty of government to protect the homeland, and that includes the invasion by people without permission from our southern border. Thousands of people a day come in here without our permission, and I'm here to say that it's our obligation as a Nation to protect the southern border.

There has been legislation, bipartisan, that has been introduced this week to move that direction; 8,000 more border agents, using the military surveillance; also, requiring that American departments such as Social Security, Homeland Security and the IRS work together to prevent people from fraudulently trying to become American citizens, and of course, requiring more immigration judges. And I think we personally should use the National Guard and put them on the southern border as well. Whatever it takes, by lawful means, to secure the Nation's homeland, we owe that to the Nation, we owe that to the veterans who fought all over the world, and we owe it to the veterans who are on the southern border with Mexico to make sure that we protect our country, the dignity and sovereignty of this Nation.

And that's just the way it is.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1429, IMPROVING HEAD START FOR SCHOOL READINESS ACT OF 2007

Ms. MATSUI, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110-440) on the resolution (H. Res. 813) providing for consideration of the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 1429) to reauthorize the Head Start Act, to improve program quality, to expand access, and for other purposes, which was referred to the